A LETTER

Of Advice from a Friend, sent to

Sir Thomas Armestrong

IN

NEWGATE,

After the Rate for his

EXECUTION,

Touching his Present

CONDITION.

SIR,

AMongst the *Eastern* Emperours on the Day of their Inauguration into that Dignity, 'twas a Custom to present them with several pieces of *Marble*, to make Choice of which piece they best liked for their *Tombe*. The *Egyptians* in their Festivals, had always a *Death-Head* served up with their last Course. And the *Macedonian Philip*, maintained an Officer to re-mind him of his Mortality, with a *Memento te Mortalem esse!*

If thus therefore in the highest Prosperities of Fortune, in the midst of Health and Jovial hours, these Admonitions of *Death* were looked on as necessary amongst the Ancients, not knowing how soon their Glories might be levelled with the *Dust*, I hope ye will not take it ill in me, at this time, under those Circumstances the Justice and Providence of the Almighty hath overtaken you, that I thus appear as a Monitor to warn you of that approaching Fate which so nearly attends you.

Death, as it is the separation of *Soul* and *Body*, those two Ancient and Endeared Friends, is rarely welcome to the best of Men; Nature is ready to Hesitate at her Summons, and Tremble at her Approach; even then, when she brings with her the Robes of Honour, and puts on the most pleasing Aspect that a Vertuous Life and a quiet Conscience can deserve of her; much less when she appears as an Enemy with the Terrors of Guilt, and marks of Horror in her Face, to Cite the Criminal to the great Tribunal of *Heaven* and Earth, to Answer the Almighty for the crying Exorbitances of an Ill-spent and Debauched Life: it is not therefore to be trifled with, or prepared for with a Cursory easie Complement, a bare (*Lord have Mercy on me*;) a Dying Sigh, or departing Groan; but 'ere you launch into the Ocean of Eternity whither the fame conveys you, that you ought to consider what Bottom you trust to: and Pardon me Sir, In regard hereof, I presume hereby to remember you of some part of your Duty, which in this great affair is Incumbent upon you. The Crimes you stand Guilty of are not ordinary, or slight Peccadiloes, the weaknesses of Nature, a hasty unadvised Breath of Passion, a Courtly Desire, or Lascivious Inclination; but such, and so great, is that Guilt you lye under, as nothing less than the forfeit of your Blood can expiate on Earth: and the Mercy of the All-Merciful God forgive in *Heaven*. The *Particulars* I need not enumerate: your own Conscience, I hope, 'ere this reflects them to your Memory, with the Scarlet and crying Aggravations

hereof,

hereof, and you behold them with another Eye then formerly you did. The Perspective is inverted, and Murder is no longer Galantry and height of Youth and Spirit, Deceit and Injustice the Quaintness of Wit, and Parts, *Treason* and *Conspiracy* against the Life and Person of the best of *KINGS* and *Brothers*, the preservation of Monarchy the Overthrow of the best of Governments and Religions, the mantainance of our Rights, Priviledges, and Liberties.

These Sir, have been the Crimes, and these in you almost Crimes Unpardonable. When the Imperial *Roman* was Stabbed in the *Senate*, the most unkind Stroke was from his beloved *Brutus*: (*Et tu mi Brute?*) In likemanner, amidst the number of those who are your Fellow-Villains and Conspirators that prepared the Dagger for the Royal Heart of your Soveraign, (tho God be praised your Designs were Frustrated) scarce a *Brutus* there to whom with more Reproach his Sacred Majesty might have said, And is it you? do you Conspire against me, whom my Mercy hath so often spared? Is the Life thou owest to my Royal Bounty, Imployed against me? Did I preserve thy Breath to shorten my own? And save thee from the Gallows, To foster an Enemy for my Self? Have my favours cloyed thee? Have my repeated Indulgences deserved this at thy Hand? Horrible Ingratitude! And Might not this have been said against you? It might, you must Acknowledge it, for the whole World is now no stranger thereunto; and consider with your self, that if God should so deal with you by your own Measures as you intended with your Soveraign, the utmost that Almightyness it self could Inflict upon you, would be your down-fall: But *Heaven* be thanked, tho you have forfeited all hopes of Mercy in this World, a true and unfeigned Repentance of, and a Contrition for the Crimes, with a full and open Confession to God and Man how far you have therein been concerned, may preserve you from a bitter despair of God's Mercy: Nor can you without it possibly imagine ever to obtain it. Religion and Conscience Exact this Duty from you: your *King* and Country whom you have so highly Offended, whom you Threatned and endeavoured to Ruine and Desolate, can no otherwise be satisfied, than in a Discovery of the rest of those that are still in Enmity against them. Let not the Faces of our Foes be hid, lest they perpetrate their Malice upon us. The Friendship you owe them, is no obligation to their Concealment; for you are now to shake Hands with them for ever, and in another World you'l never be taxed with Ingratitude for Deserting them: they have left that God whom you hope to approach; are Enemies to him that you now would give (were they in your disposal) a Thousand Worlds to be Friends with; and unless you disown them he'll never own you.

Consider this, and let not Justice be stopped: Providence hath brought thee under the Stroke thereof, and I hope you are not Insensible of the immediate Hand of God therein: and well it is that he hath hitherto spared you, he might as well have Corrupted your Life in the midst of your Ryots and Extravagancies, he might have levelled a Plague at your Heart, or a Bolt at your Head when you defied him, and hurried you long since into the Pit of eternal Perdition, whence no Appeal had lain to the Throne of his free Grace: but he hath given you a Day, tho it be a short one, to make your Peace with him. Lose no time, for the Evening of your Life draws on apace; Night is upon you, a long, long, Eternal Night, wherein you must never more behold the material Beams that shine now upon you; and as you improve this little, little Time, Happiness or Misery attends you: Everlasting Bliss or never-ending Pain in an unknown Climate, to which you are now going: for which Change the Lord prepare you, and Sanctifie these Afflictions unto you for your Benefit; which is the Prayer of him that abhors your Crimes, but loves your Soul,

Your once Affectionate Friend

N. T.

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